

Professor Henry Lipson—A Homage

Professor Henry Lipson, CBE, FRS, Emeritus Professor of Physics at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, died on 26th April, 1991 at the age of 81. He was born on March 11, 1910.

Henry Lipson was one of the gifted scientists who nurtured X-ray Crystallography in its infancy. Together with his colleague, C.A.Beevers, he developed a calculating device, known as the “Beevers-Lipson strips”, which was used world-wide before the advent of computers. He determined the atomic arrangement of many important solids through the principles of X-ray diffraction and optical transforms. He co-authored seven books on X-ray Crystallography and contributed many original papers in scientific Journals. He also wrote, with his son, Stephen, a widely-used textbook on optics and a history of experimental Physics. In 1957 he was elected Fellow to the Royal Society. He came to the Physics Department of Calcutta University as a visiting Professor in 1963. A monograph on ‘Optical Diffraction etc’ was published by the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science in 1967.

Henry’s father was a manual worker in a steelworks. Henry obtained scholarship from Hawarden county school and went to Liverpool University where he studied Physics. After graduation, he took research work in the emerging field of X-ray Crystallography, making own X-ray tubes along with Beevers. Later, he worked as an assistant to Sir Lawrence Bragg. In 1945 he moved out to Manchester as the Head of the Physics Department in the college of Science & Technology and was soon promoted. Under his leadership the Physics department was galvanised into life. He had a gift for spotting talent and he fostered the careers of a number of young Physicists who later became reputed scientists. He passionately believed in the importance of good clear writing, correct grammar and punctuation. He actively promoted the causes of the social responsibility of scientists and of nuclear disarmament.

He is survived by his wife, Jenny, his daughter Anne,.....a physics teacher.....and son Stephen,.....Professor of Physics in Haifa but Judith, a metallurgist, died last year.

We take this opportunity to pay homage to this distinguished scientist to express our deep gratitude for his rich contributions in the field of X-ray Crystallography.

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